

**MONROE TOWN COUNCIL  
Monroe, Connecticut  
FINAL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**November 13, 2012 – 8:00 PM – Council Chambers**

**Present:** Chairman Enid Lipeles  
Vice Chairman Deborah Heim  
Councilmember Debra Dutches  
Councilmember Nick Kapoor  
Councilmember Raymond Knapp, Jr.  
Councilmember Frank Lieto  
Councilmember Dee Dee Martin  
Councilmember Tony Unger

**Absent:** Councilmember J.P. Sredzinski

**Also Present:** First Selectman Stephen J. Vavrek

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A special meeting of the Monroe Town Council was held on Tuesday November 13, 2012 at 8:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Monroe Town Hall.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

Motion to approve the minutes and voting record of the regular meeting held on October 22, 2012 (Session 2012-18).

Motion to approve the minutes and voting record of the special meeting held on November 1, 2012.

Request for Refunds dated November 1, 2012 totaling \$4,123.83.

*Vice-Chairman Heim made a correction to Action Items, Town Council Committee on Finance, Education, Health & Public Safety Matters. The first sentence should read Vice Chairman Heim reported they met this evening. The Board of Education discussed the full time kindergarten.*

*Councilmember Martin requested under Appointments for Bernard Sippin, the sentence should read Councilmember Martin and Councilmember Knapp stated they will vote in favor of this appointment for Bernard Sippin, but would have preferred a female to serve as 15% of officers are female.*

The Consent Calendar was passed unanimously with the noted amendments to the October 22, 2012 Town Council Meeting and was passed unanimously to the Special Meeting held on November 1, 2012.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Memo from the Town Council Chair to the First Selectman dated October 23, 2012 regarding Jockey Hollow Fire Station Remediation.

Memo from the Tax Collector to the Town Council Chair dated November 1, 2012 regarding Requests for Refunds totaling \$4,123.08.

Opinion Letter from Town Attorney John Fracassini to the First Selectman dated November 8, 2012 regarding Town of Monroe/VEMS/Paramedic Agreement.

Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated November 8, 2012 regarding STEAP Grant Reclaim and Pave Timothy Hill Road.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*Dee Dee Martin, 95 Maryanne Drive stated she would like the record to reflect the hard work and dedication Ms. Debra Dutches portrayed with her efforts on the absentee ballot. She also*

wanted to express her congratulations to Ms.Sue Koneff and Ms. Judy Stripay. She offered her thanks and appreciation for everyone's hard work and also noted everything ran smoothly and calmly.

### **APPOINTMENTS**

None

### **ACTION ITEMS**

#### ***Town Council Committee on Finance, Education, Health & Public Safety Matters***

Vice Chairman Heim reported the next meeting is scheduled for November 26, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. She also wanted to express her thanks to the Public Works Department, Police Department, Fire Department and all public service departments that helped the town during Hurricane Sandy.

Councilmember Kapoor offered an idea regarding the quorum problems the Board of Finance incurs during the summer months due to some difficult schedules. He stated the Connecticut General Statutes allow a municipality by ordinance to provide for alternate members on the Board of Finance. Councilmember Kapoor stated the statute says they can be appointed or elected. He strongly urges **elected** alternate members of the Board of Finance. He noted if Council approves and goes through the Committee process it may take many months, but if there is a consensus of the Council on this idea, he would hope to move forward and put on the municipal 2013 ballot. He requested Chairman Lipeles and Vice Chairman Heim to refer this idea to FEPS for further discussion.

#### ***Town Council Committee on Planning & Zoning, Public Works and Parks & Recreation Matters***

Councilmember Unger reported they met and stated as part of the sub-committee, they are also the Town Hall roof committee and approved two invoices. One was a progress payment for Dolphin Construction and the second was a payment for the Clerk of the Works. Councilmember Unger also discussed the inland/wetlands enforcement ordinance and the blight ordinance. He requested the committee make the blight ordinance, the inland/wetlands enforcement ordinance, and the planning and zoning enforcement/violation ordinance all look similar. First Selectman Vavrek stated they may be online for viewing. Councilmember Unger also noted discussions were done regarding planning and zoning and parks and recreation. A meeting will be scheduled in two weeks for the next progress payments for the roof.

#### ***Town Council Committee on Legislative & Administrative Matters***

Councilmember Sredzinski was absent and did not have a meeting since last Town Council meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 20, 2012 at 5:00 p.m.

#### ***Trumbull/Monroe Health District***

Councilmember Knapp reported a meeting was scheduled for tonight and did state they had a quorum and it was not necessary to go. He did state there were two new appointments from Trumbull. He will have minutes to discuss at the next Town Council meeting.

#### ***First Selectman's Update***

First Selectman Vavrek reported because of the storm last week, he might have misunderstood the Unfinished Business on this agenda and stated he will be discussing the items on Unfinished Business on his First Selectman Update. He stated on the GIS update, he is still waiting on the award letter from OPM to formally initiate the project. He has been told this will happen the first week of December and he has convened a working regional GIS Committee. Doug Arndt, Director of Public Works, and Scott Schatzlein, Inland/Wetlands, are on this committee. He stated while we wait for our actual award GBRP has drafted an RFP for aerial imagery and base mapping. He noted it will be discussed at our next meeting and released the day after. He noted all the prep work will enable us to hit the ground running as soon as OPM release the funds and will keep Council posted.

An update of road work performed by the Public Works Department between the months of April and November, 2012 was given out to Council. The roadwork costs include: drainage repairs such as pipe replacement, catch basin repairs, etc., new drainage to improve known problem areas, contracted services, and materials installed by the Highway Department. First Selectman Vavrek stated 15.01 miles of roads have been done. He also handed out a 2013 preliminary road list to Council which is being looked at for the 2013 paving season.

First Selectman Vavrek reported a recent meeting of department heads and John Kimball regarding Chalk Hill Middle School was held on November 5, 2012. First Selectman Vavrek reported that Mr. Kimball gave an update as to where he saw the project on his end. Mr. Kimball would like to see more collaboration and support from various departments in order to move the project forward. He is also receiving some push back from the community about having the YMCA offer programs at Chalk Hill and that they were against having to become a YMCA member in order to participate in programs within their town community center. First Selectman Vavrek stated they will continue to investigate this. First Selectman Vavrek discussed the challenges to be reviewed, resolved, and milestones. He stated Doug Arndt, Director of Public Works is scheduling a Mechanical Engineer within 30 days to tour the building with a Kimball Group associate. First Selectman Vavrek stated he will obtain the Honeywell audit results and will forward this information to the group. He will set up a meeting for the committee to talk with experienced individuals with Public Private Partnership background. He also stated the Parks and Recreation Department needs to set up a meeting with the YMCA to discuss programs each would like to offer.

First Selectman Vavrek also discussed the three alternatives regarding Chalk Hill Middle School. Alternative 1 was to keep Chalk Hill open, alternative 2 was to close Chalk Hill, and alternative 3 was to demolish the Chalk Hill facility. He handed out information to all council members.

First Selectman Vavrek discussed the Jockey Hollow Fire House Remediation update. He stated the Department of Public Works and CIRMA have been negotiating needed repairs to this facility. He noted the original roof quote did not fully address the issues that have been brought forth by EMS. He stated a 3<sup>rd</sup> party insurance adjuster will be looking at the extent of damage and he will be waiting for their report. Tests were done but the presence of mold have not been confirmed 100%. Work will be exploratory in these areas and the appropriate action taken if necessary. First Selectman Vavrek stated the report is expected back by the end of the week and hopes to begin work on this building early December. He did stress the main problem with this building is that the roof replacement has not been funded after years of budget requests. Work will include removal and replacement of kitchen walls damaged from water and other building repairs including work in the training room.

First Selectman Vavrek discussed Munis. He stated the transition team has met with the Munis staff numerous times to work on the following: create implementation schedule; establish chart of accounts; coordinate town and Board of Education to create "go live" dates for Munis payroll. The Monroe Munis Team has had, and will continue to have, biweekly phone conferences with Munis staff to monitor ongoing work including, training needs and adherence to the transition timeline. First Selectman Vavrek also noted with the recent interruption from Hurricane Sandy, we remain on schedule. This latest storm also affirmed that remote hosting of Munis is a prudent strategy for avoiding interruptions to Finance, Human Resources, and Payroll. He stated all team members have invested a great deal of time and effort to make this transition run smoothly.

First Selectman Vavrek noted that he was told by Ms. Vida Stone, Administrative Assistant, that all Town Council members have received the full Board of Finance packets every month and Town Council members regularly attend Board of Finance meetings. He stated if you need clarity on Board of Finance packet information, the Town Council Chairman should request in writing from the Board of Finance Chairman.

First Selectman Vavrek stated this upcoming year's information requested is asked for when budget information comes before his office December 1, 2012. Previous year's information can be found in the yearly Monroe Annual Report.

Councilmember Unger stated the reason why this went on the request was to try and have a little consistency in the packages submitted. He questioned if the First Selectman is asking for Council to accept the budget for this department he would like to know the goals and objectives are and how they did the previous year.

First Selectman Vavrek stated the Monroe EOC was opened two days before the storm came. He noted Hurricane Sandy was much worse than last year's storm with many more trees lost. Due to this tree loss, many CL&P and utility poles were destroyed or heavily damaged. He noted the good thing is, with the very hard work of our EOC staff, Monroe Department of Public Works crew, and staff in conjunction with our police, volunteer EMS, Fire, Parks and Recreation, along with the side by side coordination with the Board of Education staff, we were

up and running much better than the previous storms compared to some of our neighbors. In addition, our library, Senior Center, Trumbull Monroe Health District and our newly commissioned CERTS volunteers really stepped up to the plate as well. First Selectman Vavrek also expressed special thanks to State Rep. Debralee Hovey who worked alongside his office to make sure the utilities followed through. He claimed the toughest part of town wide communication was the fact that Town Hall had also lost phone and internet service for various periods of time the first two days of the storm. Also, Code Red subscribers grew steadily during the storm as did the First Selectman Facebook page. The facebook page had close to 5,000 hits during the storm week proving the power of social media.

First Selectman Vavrek stated the Consolidation of Services is an ongoing discussion between the Board of Education and Town Hall administrations. He noted there are many factors involved and until they are worked through both systems should not be announced.

Chairman Lipeles requested Councilmember's if they have any questions regarding Unfinished Business to gather their questions and they will be discussed.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **Roads Update**

Council had no questions or comments.

### **Chalk Hill Building**

Councilmember Kapoor wanted to know if members of elected boards or their designees were invited to the meeting held on November 5, 2012. First Selectman Vavrek said no. Councilmember Dutches stated she has not seen any expenditure for Chalk Hill through August 31, 2012 and that is the last financial statement she received.

### **Town Council Policies and Procedures (DRAFT)**

Councilmember Unger stated when a project or a bonding request is made to Town Council, it must be made at least two weeks before any potential vote and it must include the following items for the project to be considered. A complete scope of the project, a timeline for implementation and completion, as well as status review dates and other milestones, estimate of costs including contingency, suggested oversight committee, and potential alternatives considered.

### **Jockey Hollow Firehouse Remediation**

Councilmember Dutches expressed her concerns where money will be coming from. First Selectman Vavrek stated this has become an emergency status and would like to wait until a report comes back to see what needs to be done. Councilmember Dutches noted if the cost is under \$150,000 the First Selectman will approach the Board of Finance and Town Council to set up a fund to make the repairs, and if over \$150,000, the First Selectman will approach the Board of Finance and Town Council, as well as a town meeting, to put monies in place to make the repairs.

### **Munis**

Jack Zamary, Director of IT and Operations was present during the meeting and discussed the Munis software. He stated everyone is committed to stay on track and their schedules are very rigorous.

### **Debt Service Projections**

Chairman Lipeles passed out a combined schedule of bonded debt thru maturity to all councilmember's.

### **2012 Financial Statements**

First Selectman Vavrek stated as discussed, any information needed the Town Council Chairman should request in writing from the Board of Finance Chairman.

### **Actuals for 2011-12**

First Selectman Vavrek stated as discussed, any information needed the Town Council Chairman should request in writing from the Board of Finance Chairman.

## **Department head review of accomplishments and objectives for upcoming year**

Discussion was done on the First Selectman Update.

### **Honeywell information gathering**

Chairman Lipeles stated that Honeywell is a 5.4 million dollar project and noted that the Board of Finance and Council may have many questions to ask. She received an email from Ms. Vida Stone, Administrative Assistant to the First Selectman, and she stated the contract was in and consists of 286 pages. Chairman Lipeles explained to Ms. Stone to get the contracts out since Honeywell will be coming with information so Councilmember's can be prepared to ask questions. Chairman Lipeles took the time to call Ken Jackson, Director of Facilities in Middletown, CT and Ginger Barrett, Superintendent of Water and Sewers for Somerset, MA to ask questions regarding the use of Honeywell for school and town building projects. Chairman Lipeles passed out answers that she received from these two towns, noting they had no problems and were satisfied with Honeywell's service.

### **Hurricane Sandy update**

Discussion was done on the First Selectman Update. Councilmember Dutches noted she volunteered one night during the crisis and wanted to thank the First Selectman, the emergency team, new CERT members, and all the management people that volunteered. She felt the community came together and was very appreciative.

### **Consolidation of Services and Goods**

Discussion was done on the First Selectman Update.

Councilmember Kapoor expressed his concern if any of the information that First Selectman Vavrek discussed under First Selectman update would be ready for budget season. First Selectman Vavrek stated there would be many negotiations.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Town of Monroe/VEMS/Paramedic Agreement**

#### **Motion: (D. Heim)**

To enter into an agreement with the Town of Monroe/VEMS/Paramedic Agreement and have First Selectman Stephen J. Vavrek sign the agreement upon Council approval.

#### **Second: (N. Kapoor)**

**Discussion:** Dennis Condon, Monroe EMS Commission Chairman was present and stated he was very comfortable with the agreement negotiated with the Valley Emergency Medical Service. Councilmember Lieto asked questions about the grievance procedure and contract termination rights with the new VEMS arrangement. Mr. Condon stated the VEMS paramedics will have to follow our EMS rules and the Monroe EMS chief will have a role in determining actions to be taken if any VEMS personnel problems arise. Councilmember Kapoor had concerns regarding the budgeted amount. Mr. Condon stated the amount being paid is less than what was budgeted. He stated the town had estimated it would pay \$444,000 a year and it will be under budget. During the current fiscal year, \$350,000 was allocated to begin the ALS service because it was to start October 1, 2012 and therefore had to cover only three-quarters of a fiscal year. Mr. Condon stated negotiations to finalize the contract took longer than expected. He hopes for December 1, 2012 that would allow Valley EMS to train personnel and make other necessary arrangements. Vice-Chairman Heim questioned if approval was sent from the state for the paramedic service. Mr. Condon said it was still pending but does not see any issues. Mr. Condon stated Jockey Hollow was temperature controlled, a question asked by Councilmember Martin.

#### **Motion passed 8-0**

### **STEAP Grant Resolution: Reclaim and Pave Timothy Hill Road**

#### **Motion (D. Heim)**

To accept the STEAP Grant Reclaim and Pave Timothy Hill Road and that First Selectman Stephen J. Vavrek be, and hereby is, authorized to accept on behalf of the Town of Monroe.

#### **Second: (T. Unger)**

**Discussion:** First Selectman Vavrek noted once Council reads through the total application it will be more understandable. He stated we created two separate industrial areas. Many people go through the scenic roads and Jockey Hollow roads and lower Pepper Street. He stated

Timothy Hill was once paved and abandoned and that it would be the perfect cut through, and obviously the state agrees. It will put people to work and extend Enterprise Drive into Timothy Hill and will take heavy traffic off the scenic roads in town. First Selectman Vavrek stated this is an appropriate project for Monroe and will extend our economic development. Councilmember Unger questioned First Selectman Vavrek if there would be any additional cost to the town. First Selectman Vavrek stated no.

**Motion passed 8-0**

## **2<sup>ND</sup> PARTICIPATION**

*Michael Klemish, 7 Patmar Circle* questioned First Selectman Vavrek if there would be fire hydrants and First Selectman Vavrek stated he would check on it. Mr. Klemish also wished to know if paramedics are on call, will there be a back up paramedic. Council stated the back-up comes from Bridgeport.

*Lee Hossler, 272 Stanley Road* offered his congratulations to Councilmember Unger for putting together a great Veterans Day ceremony on the Stepney Green. He also wished to convey *Save the Date* for the tree lighting ceremony on December 1, 2012.

*Steve Kirsch, 35 Applegate Lane*, stated his concerns about the Jockey Hollow firehouse and how it is now being in an emergency repair status. Mr. Kirsch spoke about the building study that was budgeted for this year and wanted to know when we are going to undertake that study so we can be ahead of any other building issues. He also spoke about the Honeywell contract, and mentioned at last Town Council meeting if the document will be put on the web as he would like to see it there. He concluded with budgeting money to handle hurricanes and if the town learned anything from last year's storms. First Selectman Vavrek noted you can't budget for a disaster but learning from previous years, we now know what kinds of trees to plant. First Selectman Vavrek stated compared to New Jersey and Fairfield, Monroe had all work done like tree trimming and road repair, plus the emergency team did get us running much better this year with a worse storm.

*Next Town Council Meeting will be scheduled on Monday, November 26, 2012*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion: (T. Unger)**

To adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

**Second: (R. Knapp)**

**Motion passed 8-0**

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Cerreta  
Town Council Clerk